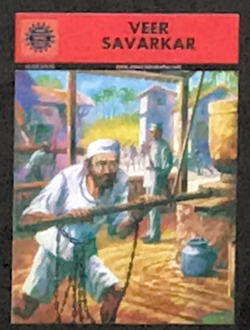
BRAVEHEARTS

TALES OF SHIVAJI

Shivaji, famous as a warrior and patriot, was also renowned for his kindness. His behaviour managed to convert a spunky young mother, an avenging widow, and a terrified maiden into devoted friends. Not only did the powerful Maratha display humility and a constant sense of fair play, he also upheld the honour of every woman whether rich or poor, enemy or ally.

OTHER ACK BRAVEHEARTS:



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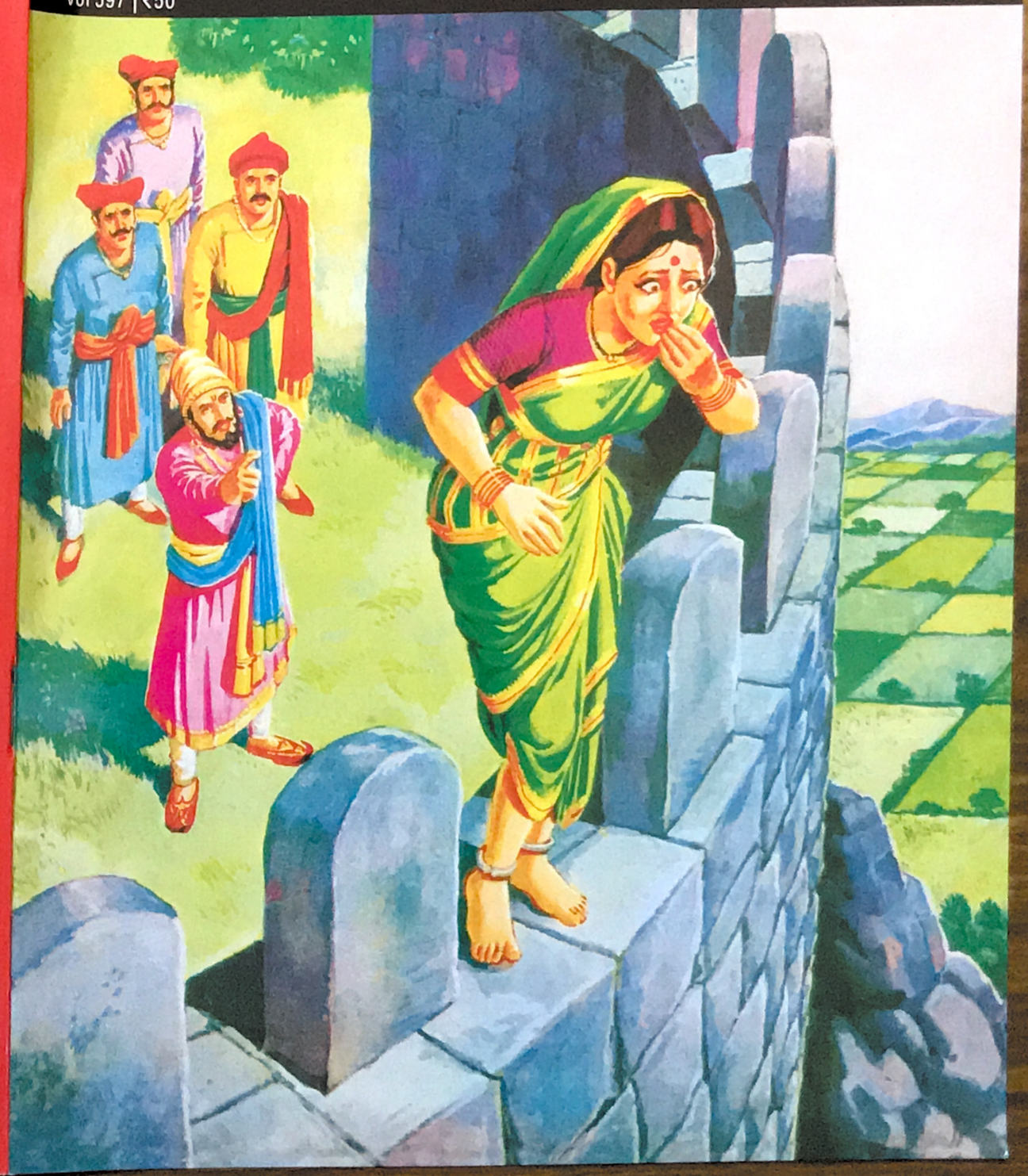
TALES OF SHIVAJI

THE LEGENDARY MARATHA WARRIOR-KING

Vol 597 | ₹50

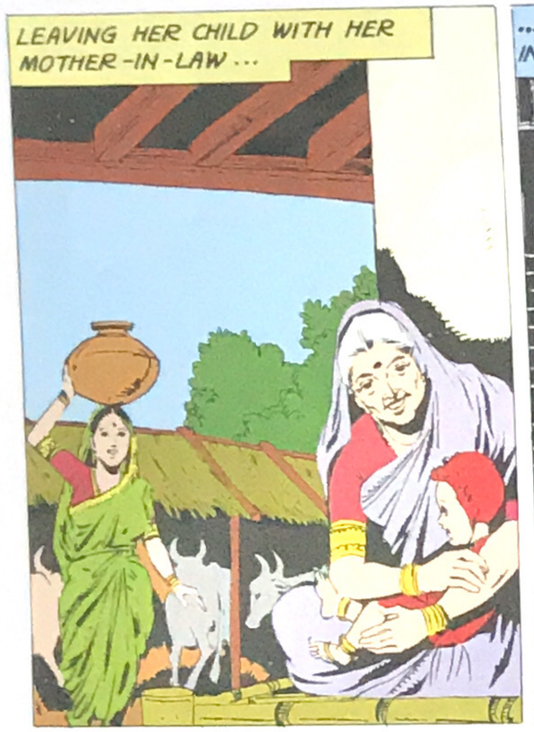


HIRA THE MILKMAID

RAIGADH, CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI'S CAPITAL, WAS SITUATED ON THE TOP OF A HILL.

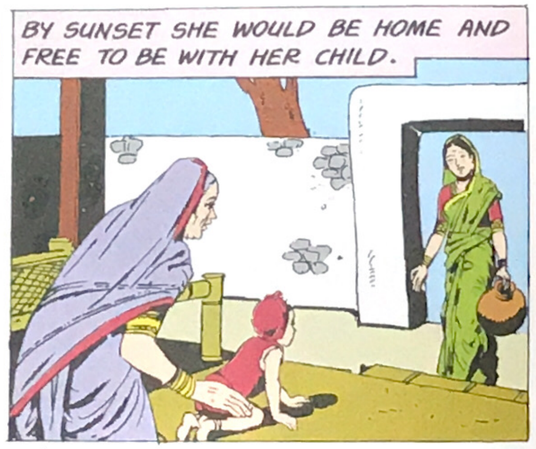
AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL THERE WAS A VILLAGE...

...WHERE HIRA, A MILKMAID, LIVED WITH HER LITTLE CHILD AND HER MOTHER-IN-LAW.

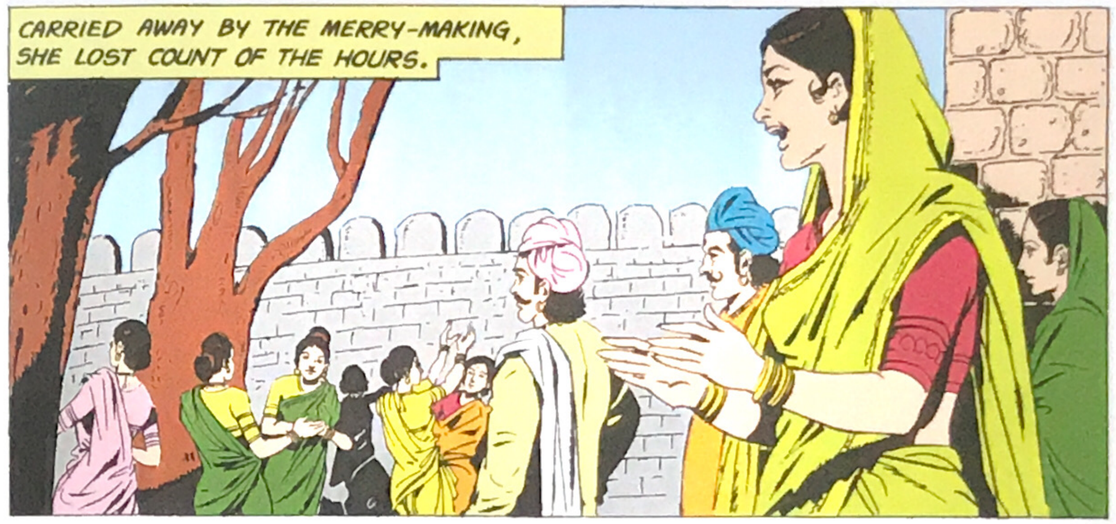

LEAVING HER CHILD WITH HER MOTHER-IN-LAW...

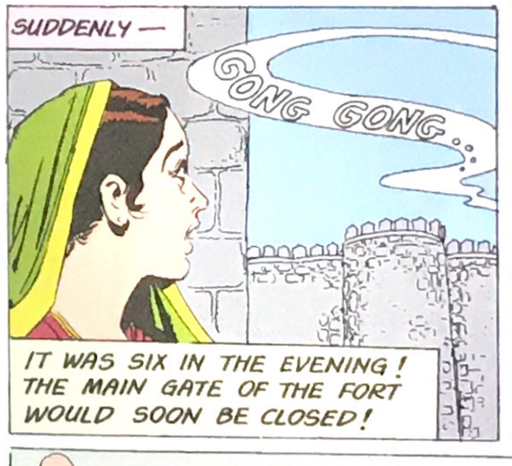
...HIRA WOULD GO TO RAIGADH TWICE A DAY—IN THE MORNING AND IN THE EVENING...

...TO SELL MILK TO THE PEOPLE IN THE FORT.


BY SUNSET SHE WOULD BE HOME AND FREE TO BE WITH HER CHILD.

ONCE, DURING THE KOJAGIRI FESTIVAL, HIRA STOPPED TO WATCH THE CELEBRATIONS, AFTER HER AFTERNOON ROUND.


CARRIED AWAY BY THE MERRY-MAKING, SHE LOST COUNT OF THE HOURS.


SUDDENLY —
GONG GONG...
IT WAS SIX IN THE EVENING! THE MAIN GATE OF THE FORT WOULD SOON BE CLOSED!

HIRA RAN TOWARDS THE GATE...

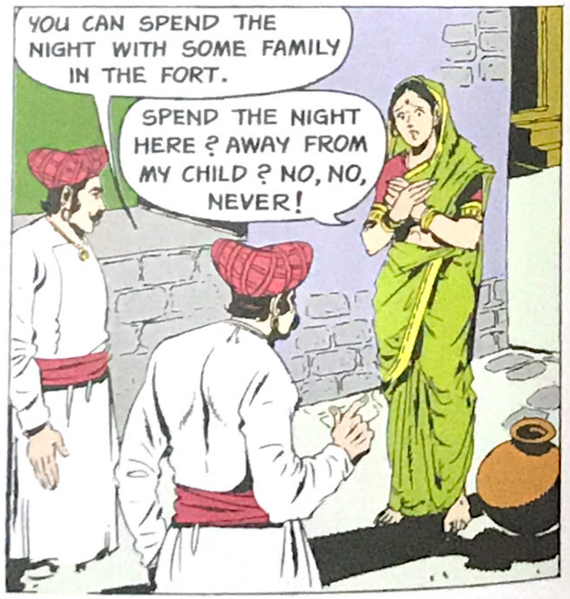
...BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.

PLEASE OPEN THE GATE.

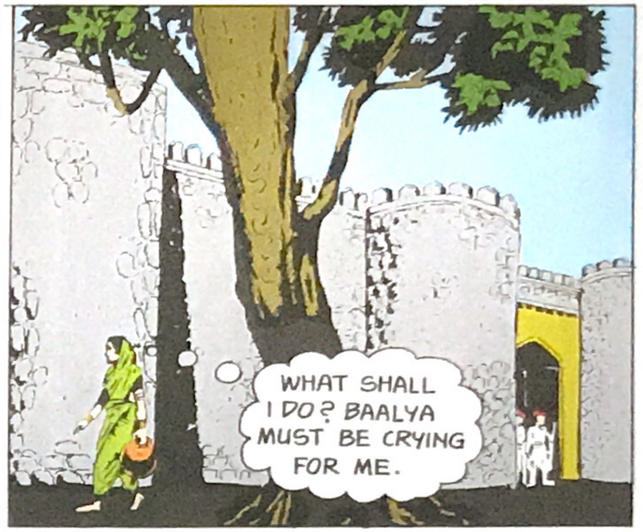
OPEN THE GATE! WHAT FOR?

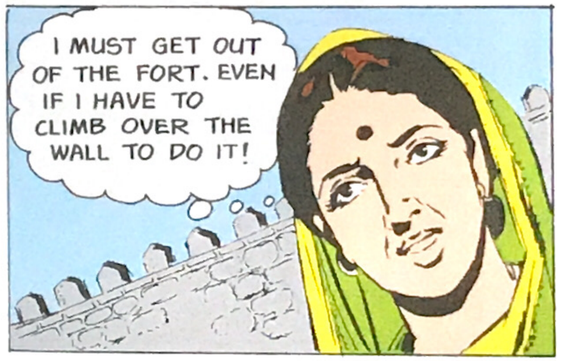
I WANT TO GO HOME. MY CHILD WILL BE WAITING FOR ME! I HAVE TO GO BACK TO HIM!
DON'T YOU KNOW? ONCE THE GATE IS CLOSED IT MUST NOT BE OPENED TILL MORNING. THE CHHATRAPATI'S ORDERS.

OPEN IT JUST A LITTLE. JUST ENOUGH FOR ME TO SLIP OUT. PLEASE.
IT CAN'T BE DONE. ORDERS ARE ORDERS!

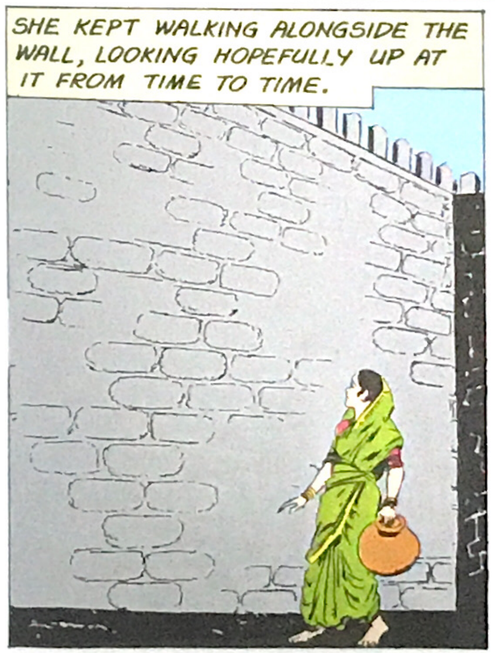

YOU CAN SPEND THE NIGHT WITH SOME FAMILY IN THE FORT.
SPEND THE NIGHT HERE? AWAY FROM MY CHILD? NO, NO, NEVER!

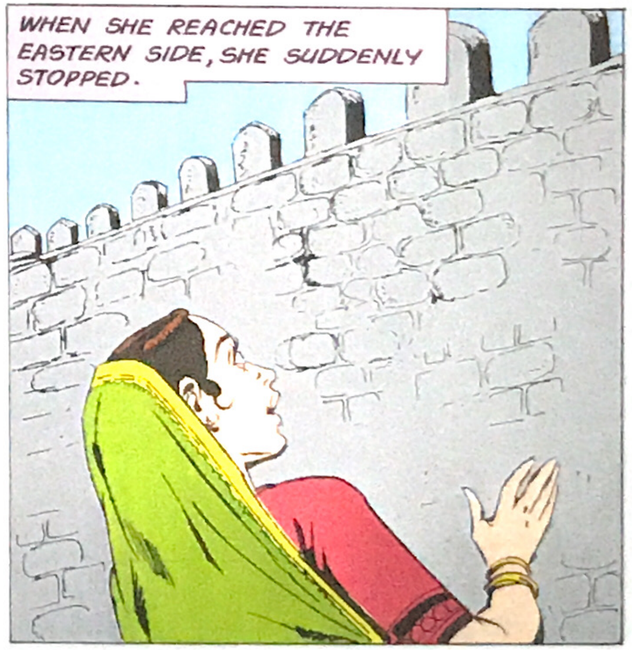
IT'S NO USE. THEY'RE NOT GOING TO OPEN IT.


WHAT SHALL I DO? BAALYA MUST BE CRYING FOR ME.

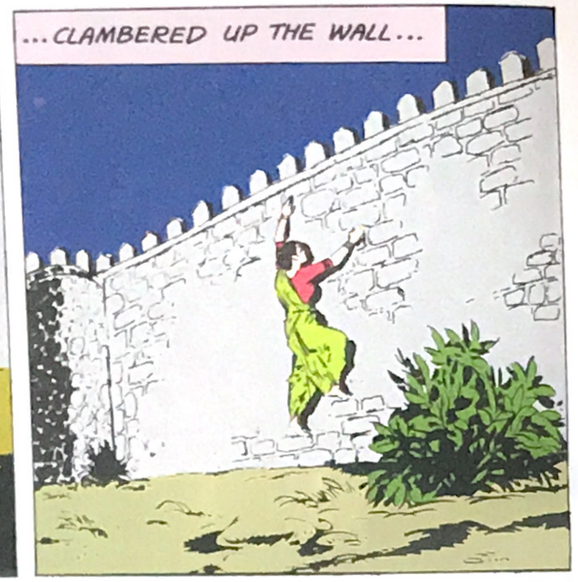

I MUST GET OUT OF THE FORT. EVEN IF I HAVE TO CLIMB OVER THE WALL TO DO IT!

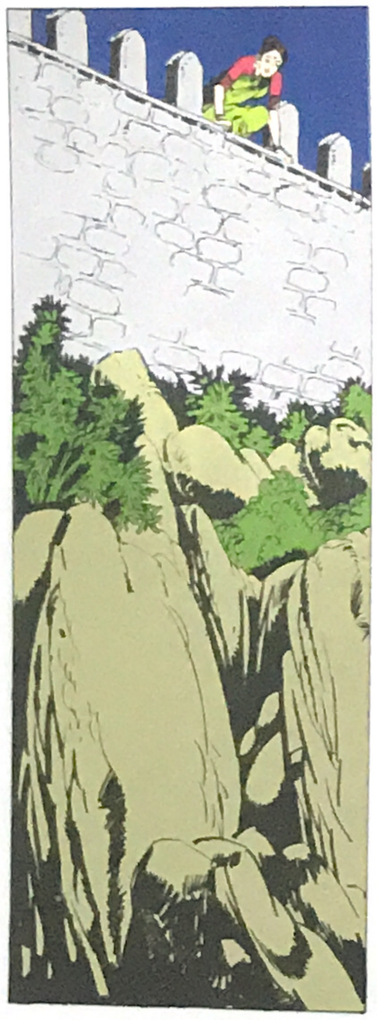
IT'S TOO HIGH HERE. PERHAPS FURTHER DOWN IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

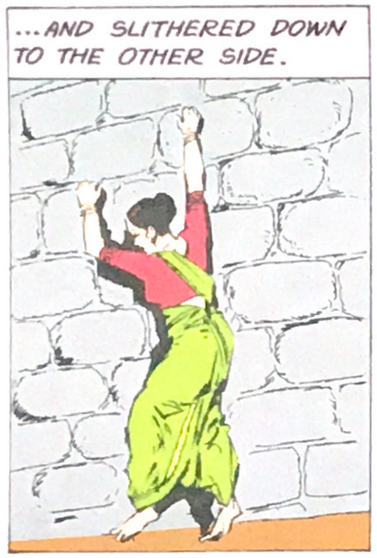

SHE KEPT WALKING ALONGSIDE THE WALL, LOOKING HOPEFULLY UP AT IT FROM TIME TO TIME.


WHEN SHE REACHED THE EASTERN SIDE, SHE SUDDENLY STOPPED.

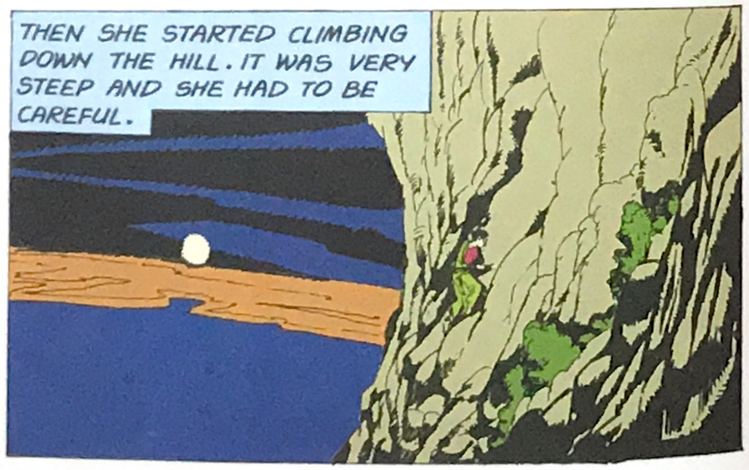
SHE HID HER EMPTY VESSEL IN THE BUSHES...


...CLAMBERED UP THE WALL...



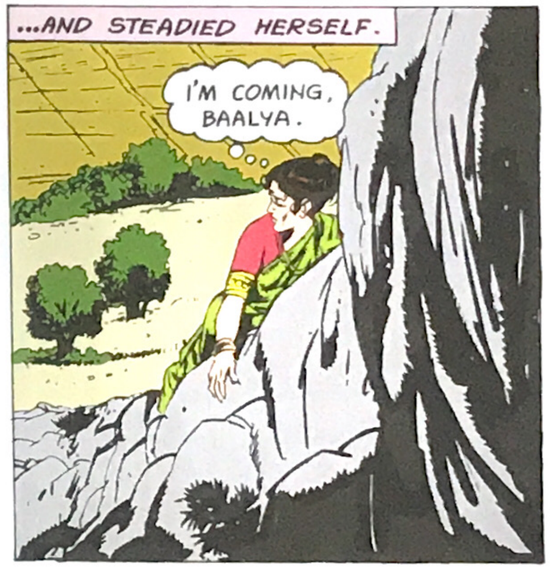

...AND SLITHERED DOWN TO THE OTHER SIDE.

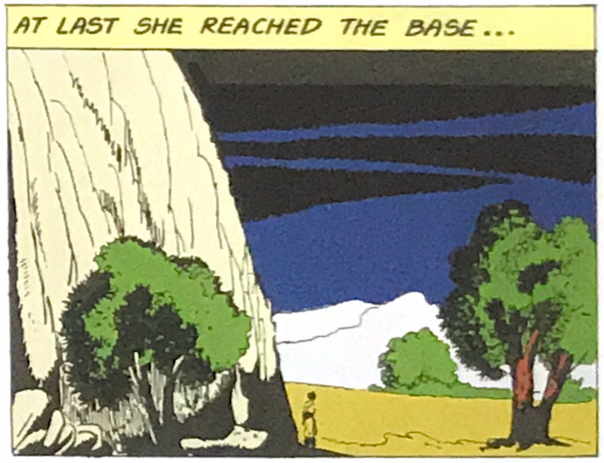
OUT AT LAST!


THEN SHE STARTED CLIMBING DOWN THE HILL. IT WAS VERY STEEP AND SHE HAD TO BE CAREFUL.

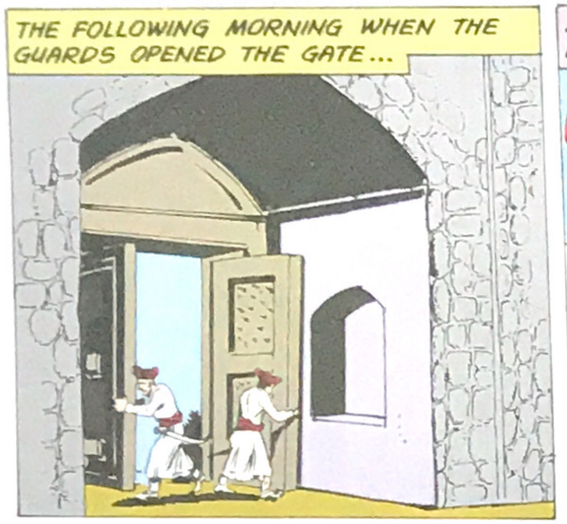
ONCE SHE SLIPPED AND LOST HER FOOTHOLD.
BAALYA!

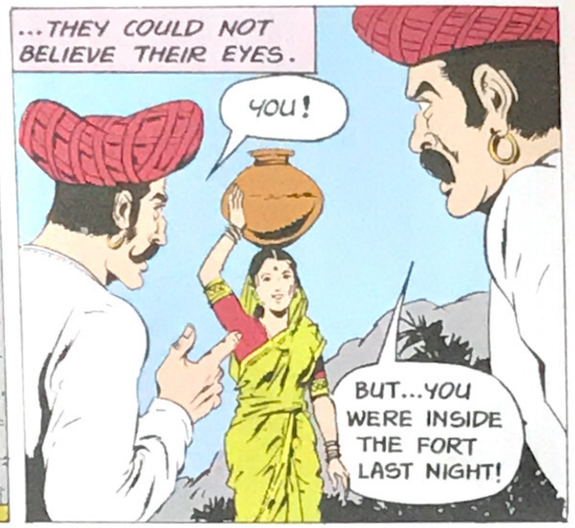
FORTUNATELY FOR HER THERE WAS A BUSH LOWER DOWN. SHE HUNG ON TO IT...


...AND STEADIED HERSELF.
I'M COMING, BAALYA.

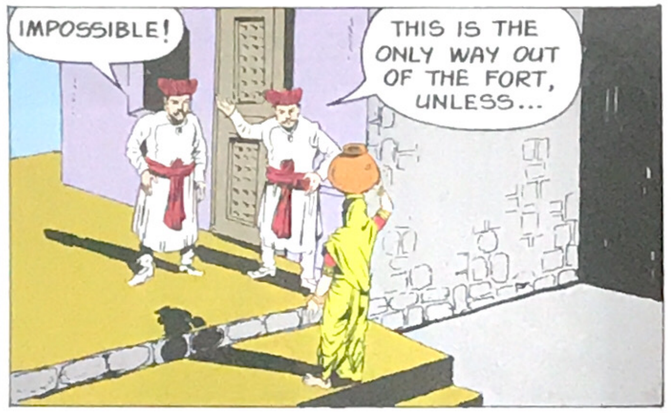

AT LAST SHE REACHED THE BASE...

...AND RAN TOWARDS HER VILLAGE.


THE FOLLOWING MORNING WHEN THE GUARDS OPENED THE GATE...

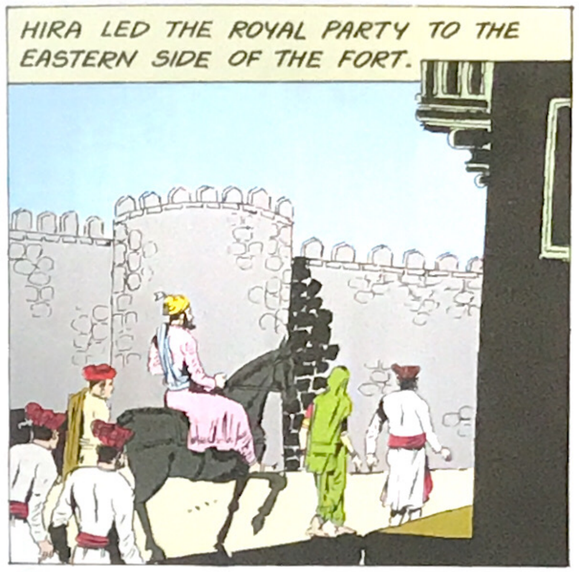

...THEY COULD NOT BELIEVE THEIR EYES.
YOU!
BUT...YOU WERE INSIDE THE FORT LAST NIGHT!

I WASN'T. I GOT OUT FROM THE EASTERN SIDE.

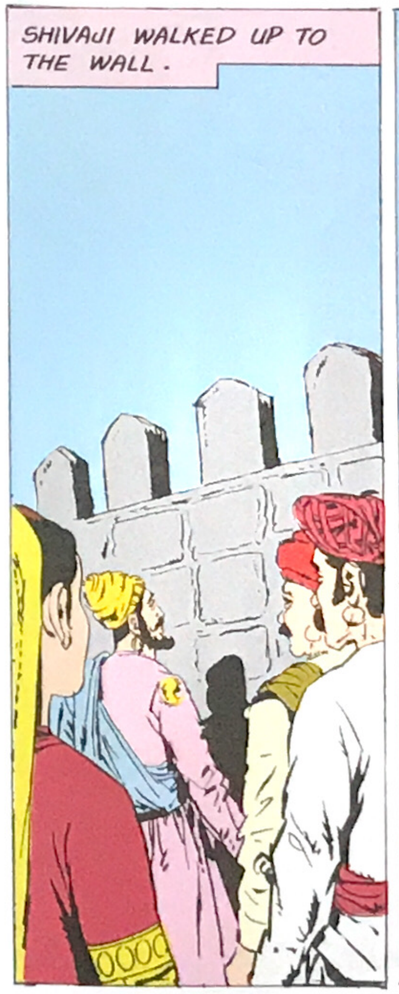

IMPOSSIBLE!
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE FORT, UNLESS...

...UNLESS THERE IS A SECRET PASSAGE.
AND THE MAHARAJ WOULD LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT THAT!

THE GUARDS MARCHED HIRA OFF TO SHIVAJI AND TOLD HIM EVERYTHING.
CAN YOU SHOW ME THE EXACT SPOT FROM WHERE YOU WENT DOWN THE HILL?
I CAN, MAHARAJ.

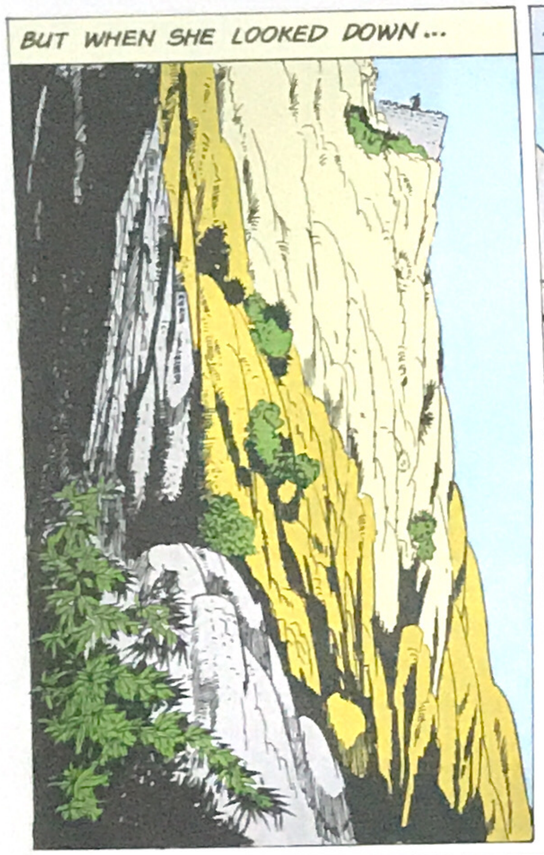

HIRA LED THE ROYAL PARTY TO THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE FORT.

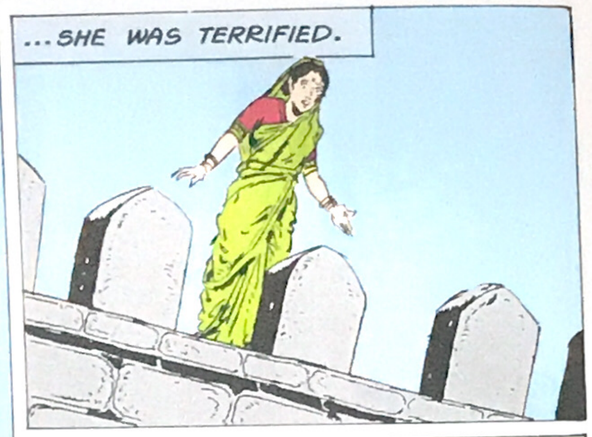
HERE'S THE VESSEL I LEFT BEHIND, MAHARAJ.

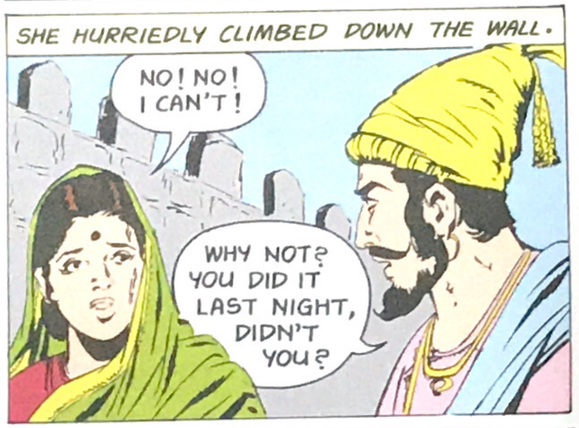

SHIVAJI WALKED UP TO THE WALL.

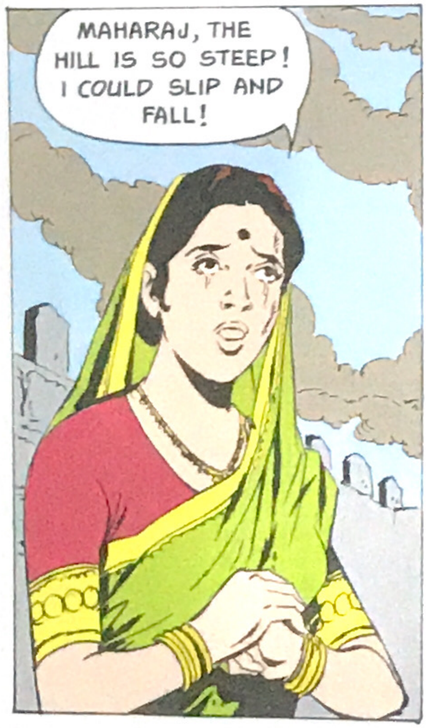
CAN YOU CLIMB DOWN NOW USING THE SAME ROUTE?

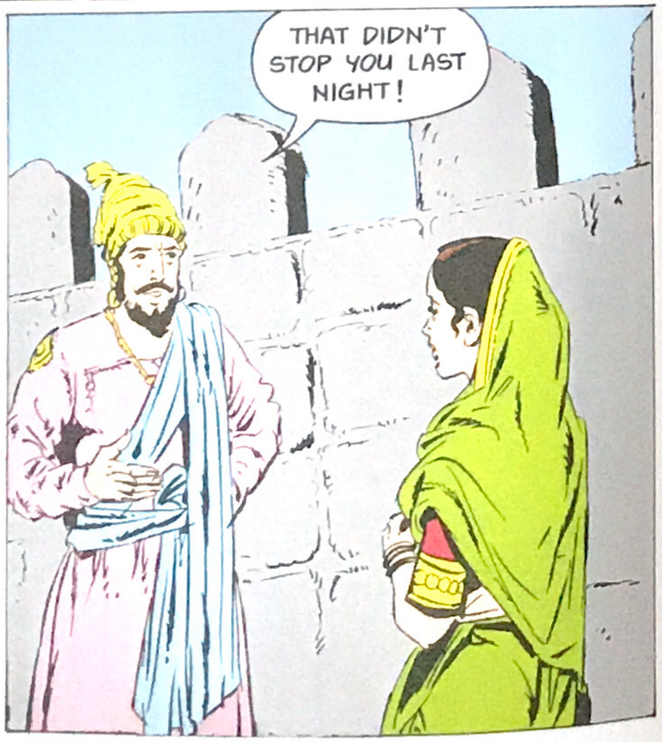
HIRA CLAMBERED UP THE WALL WITH EASE.

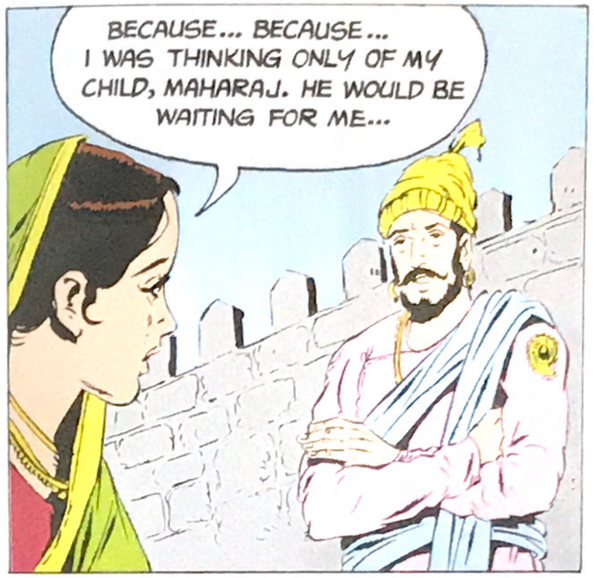

BUT WHEN SHE LOOKED DOWN...


...SHE WAS TERRIFIED.

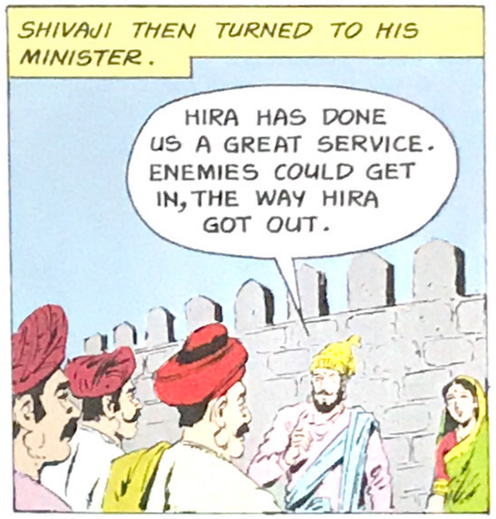

SHE HURRIEDLY CLIMBED DOWN THE WALL.
NO! NO! I CAN'T!
WHY NOT? YOU DID IT LAST NIGHT, DIDN'T YOU?

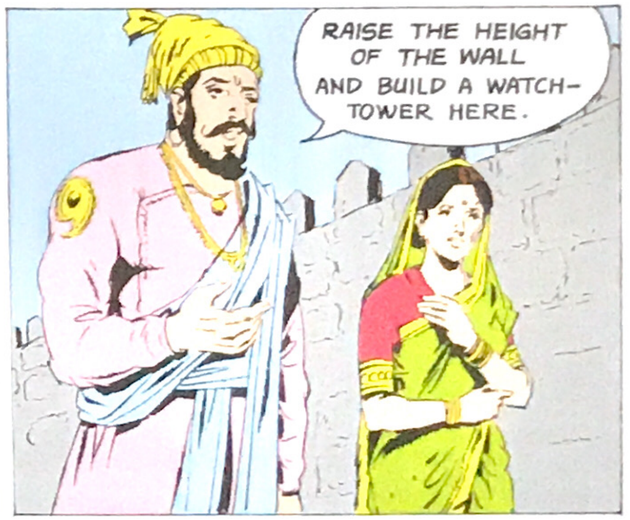

MAHARAJ, THE HILL IS SO STEEP! I COULD SLIP AND FALL!

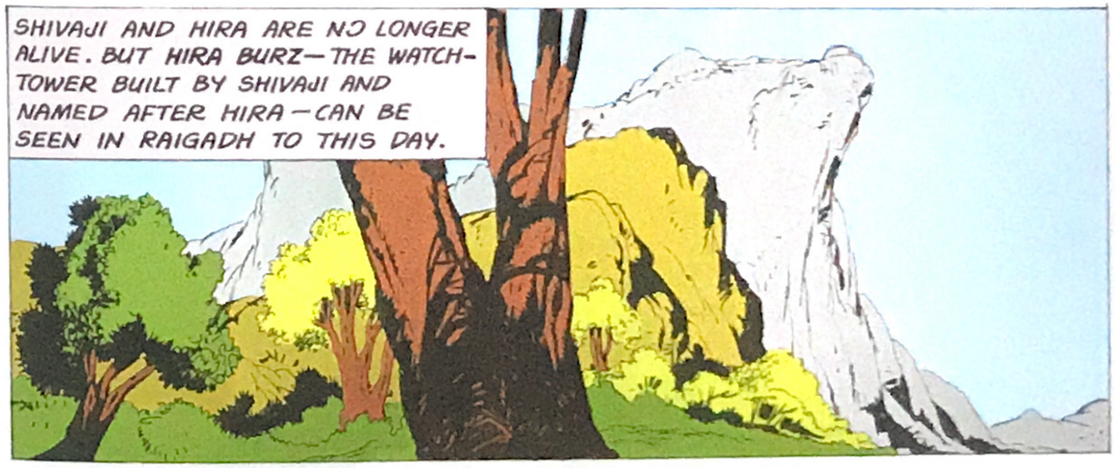

THAT DIDN'T STOP YOU LAST NIGHT!


BECAUSE... BECAUSE... I WAS THINKING ONLY OF MY CHILD, MAHARAJ. HE WOULD BE WAITING FOR ME...

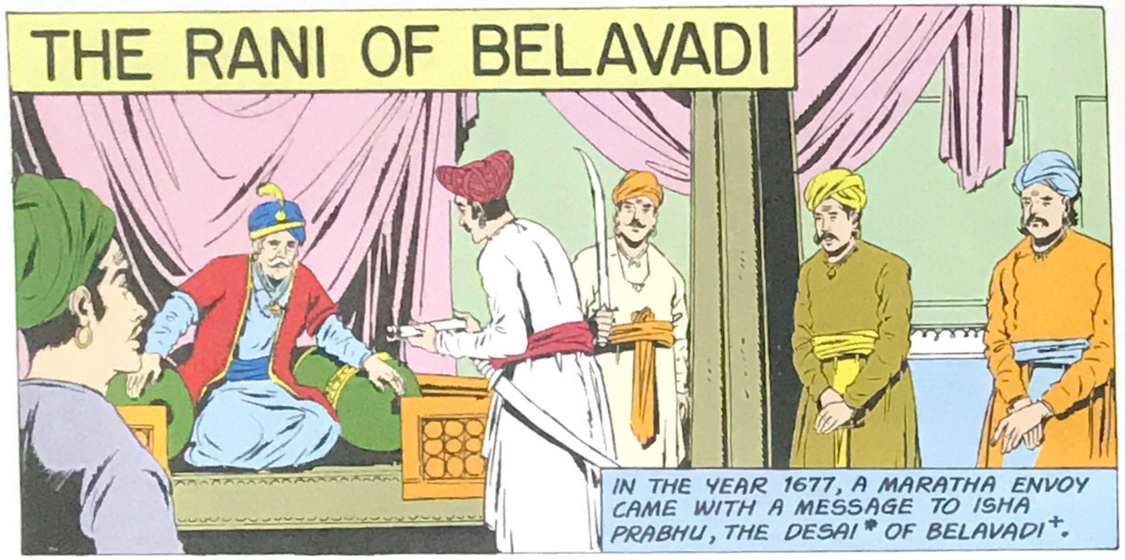
I BELIEVE YOU, HIRA. YOU ARE A BRAVE WOMAN! A BRAVE MOTHER! YOU DESERVE A REWARD.


SHIVAJI THEN TURNED TO HIS MINISTER.
HIRA HAS DONE US A GREAT SERVICE. ENEMIES COULD GET IN, THE WAY HIRA GOT OUT.

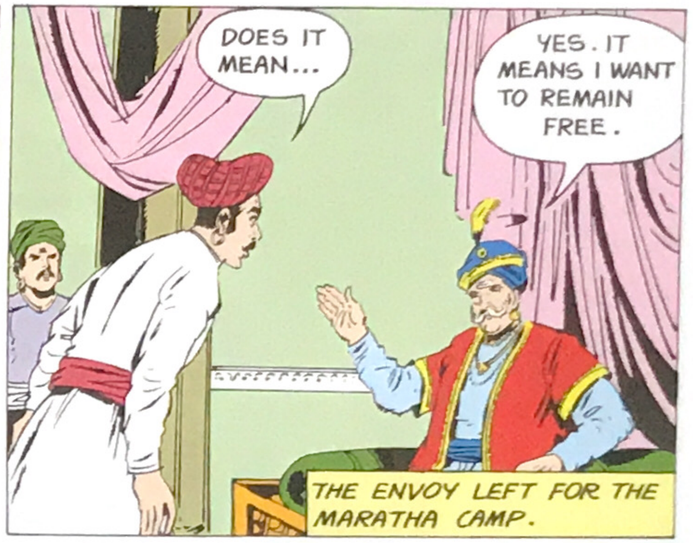

RAISE THE HEIGHT OF THE WALL AND BUILD A WATCH-TOWER HERE.

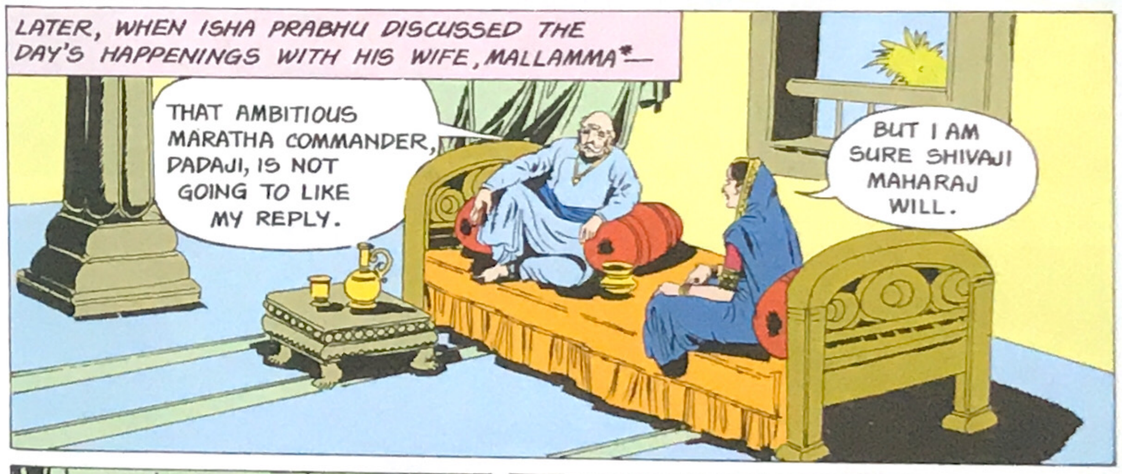

SHIVAJI AND HIRA ARE NO LONGER ALIVE. BUT HIRA BURZ—THE WATCH-TOWER BUILT BY SHIVAJI AND NAMED AFTER HIRA—CAN BE SEEN IN RAIGADH TO THIS DAY.

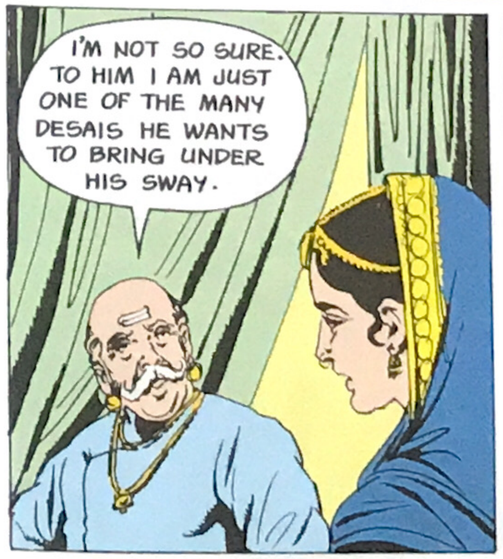
THE RANI OF BELAVADI



* FEUDAL CHIEFTAIN + IN BELGAUM DISTRICT







* ALSO KNOW BY THE NAME SAVITRIBAI

AS EXPECTED, DADAJI LAID SIEGE TO BELAVADI. MARATHA SOLDIERS SURROUNDED THE FORT.

WHEN THEY RUN OUT OF SUPPLIES THEY WILL HAVE TO SURRENDER.

BUT ISHA PRABHU WAS PREPARED FOR A SIEGE.

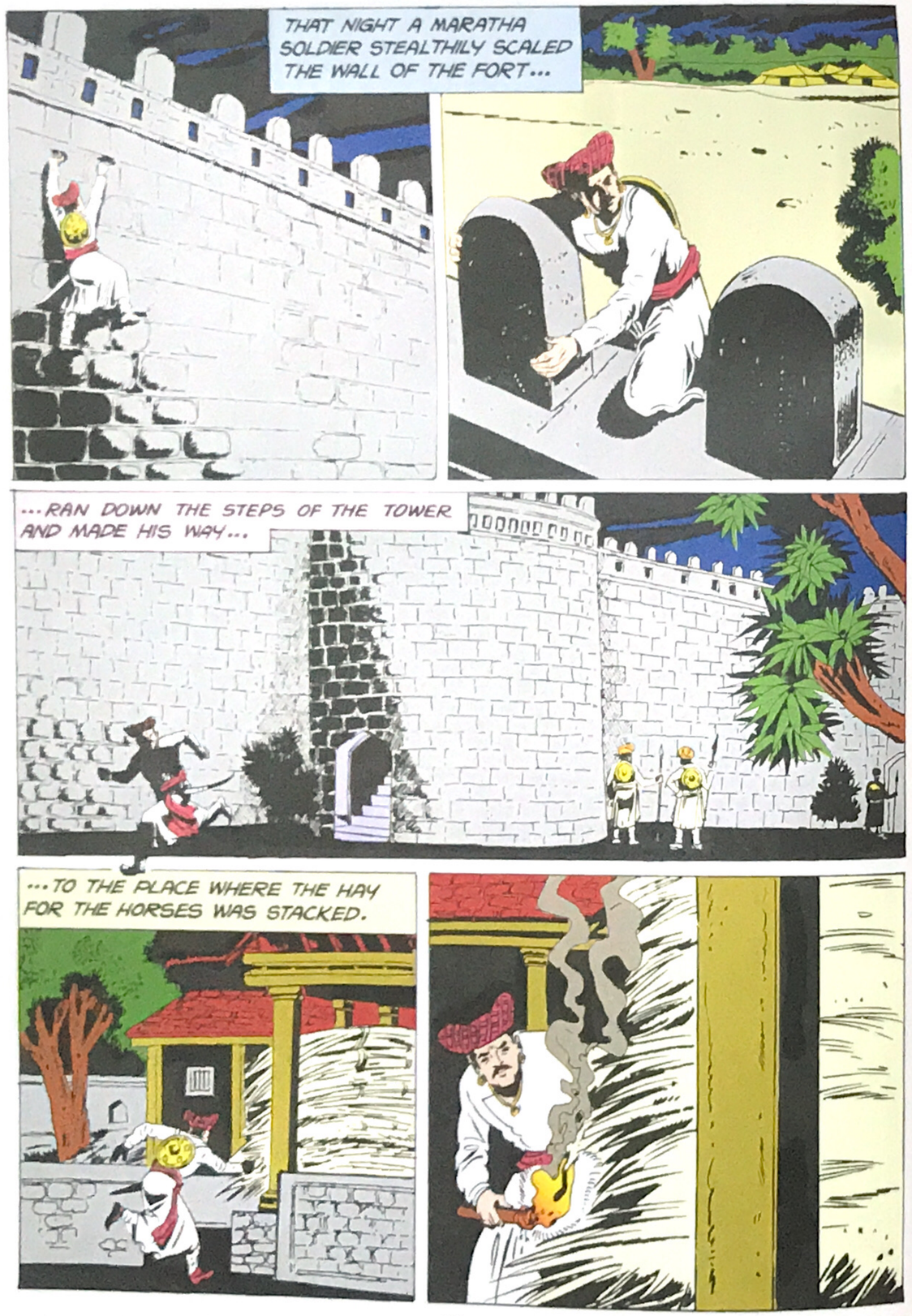
EVERY ATTEMPT OF THE ENEMY TO SCALE THE FORT WAS FOILED.

AHH...

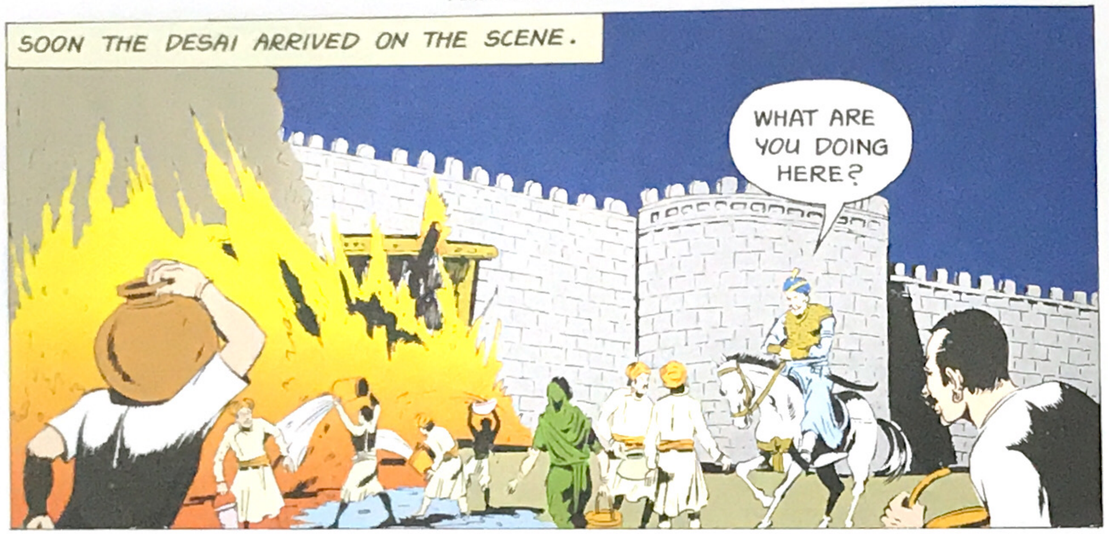
DADAJI WAS WORRIED.

WE HAVE BEEN HERE FOR OVER A MONTH AND THE FORT IS NOT YET OURS!

WE'LL HAVE TO CHANGE OUR TACTICS!


THAT NIGHT A MARATHA SOLDIER STEALTHILY SCALED THE WALL OF THE FORT...
...RAN DOWN THE STEPS OF THE TOWER AND MADE HIS WAY...
...TO THE PLACE WHERE THE HAY FOR THE HORSES WAS STACKED.

THE FIRST TO NOTICE THE FIRE WERE THE GUARDS ON THE RAMPART.
FIRE!
AS THEY RAN DOWN...
...THE MARATHA RAN TOWARDS THE GATES OF THE FORT.


SOON THE DESAI ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

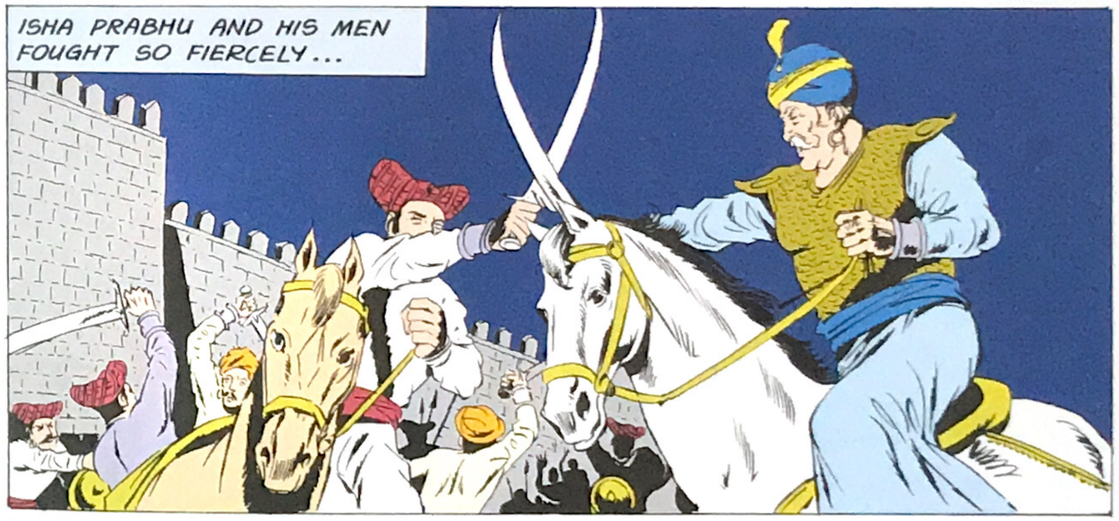
THE WHOLE GRANARY IS ABLAZE!
AND THE FIRE IS SPREADING. WE'RE TRYING TO PUT IT OUT.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WILL FIGHT THE FIRE.

YOU GET BACK TO YOUR POSTS! QUICK!

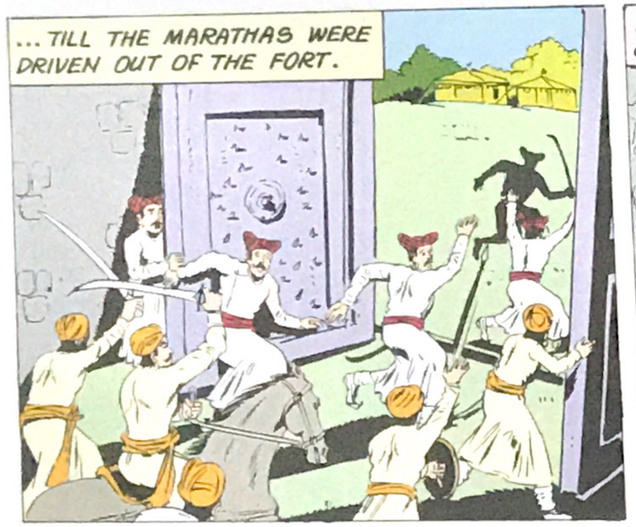
BUT IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE. THE MARATHAS HAD ENTERED THE FORT!
WE WILL DRIVE THEM OUT — EVERY ONE OF THEM!

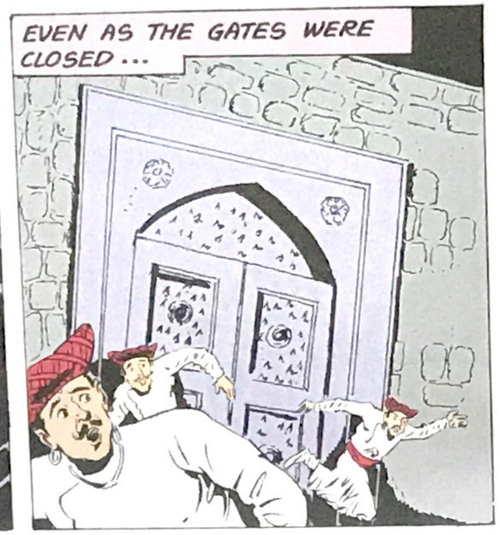
FOLLOW ME! EVERY ONE OF YOU!

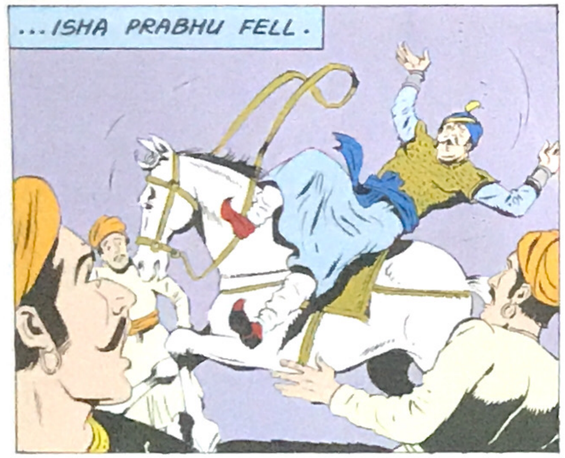

ISHA PRABHU AND HIS MEN FOUGHT SO FIERCELY...

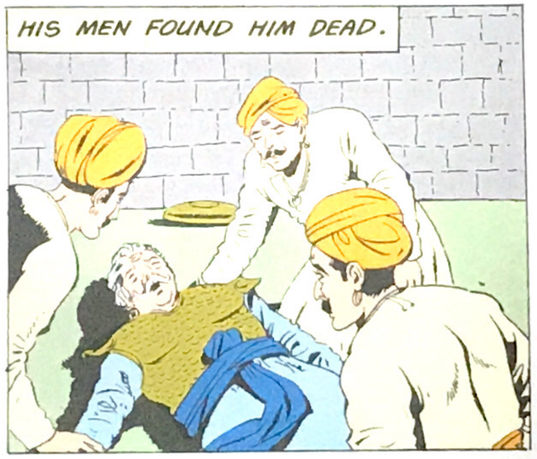
...THAT THE MARATHAS WERE COMPELLED TO RETREAT.

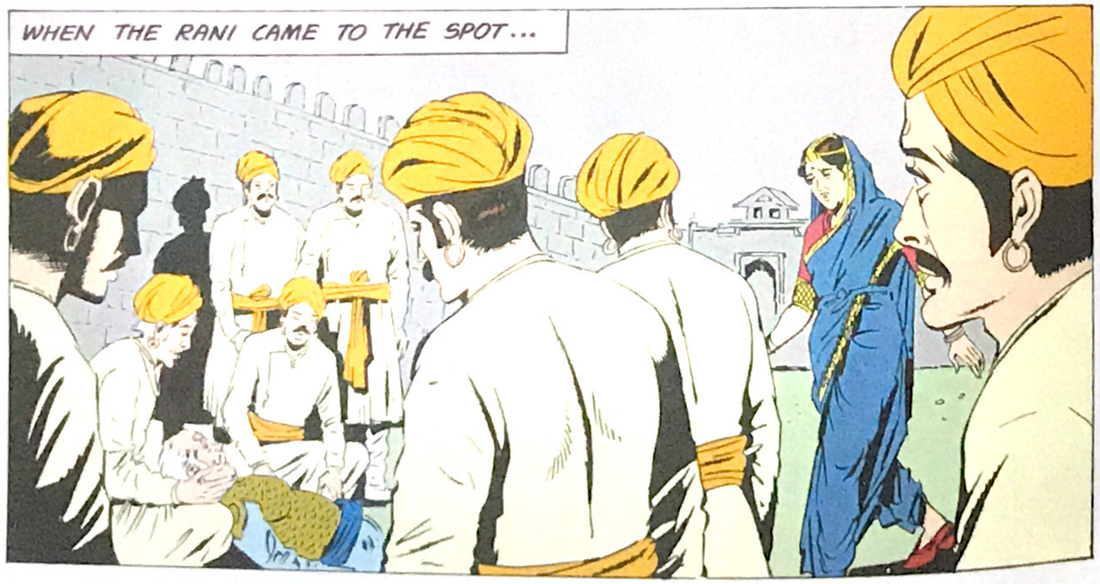
ISHA PRABHU WAS SEVERELY WOUNDED, YET HE KEPT FIGHTING...

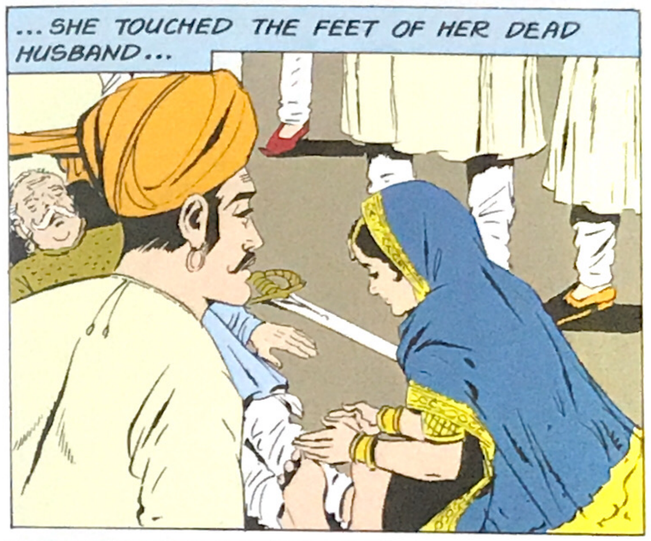

...TILL THE MARATHAS WERE DRIVEN OUT OF THE FORT.

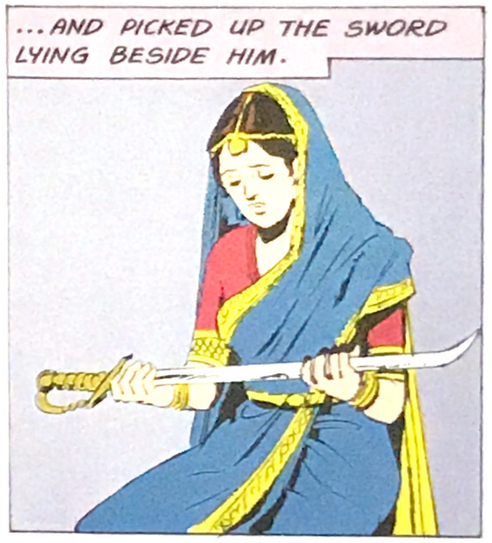

EVEN AS THE GATES WERE CLOSED...


...ISHA PRABHU FELL.

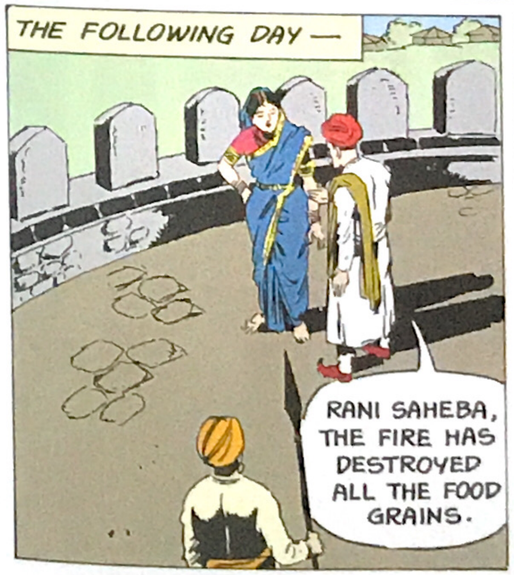

HIS MEN FOUND HIM DEAD.

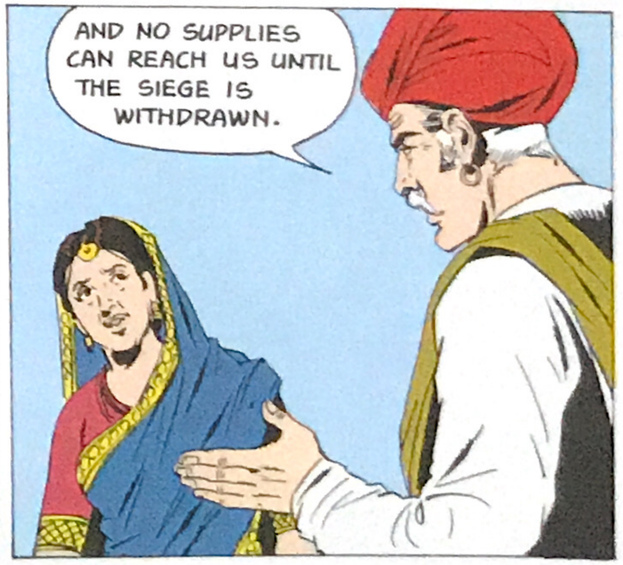

WHEN THE RANI CAME TO THE SPOT...


...SHE TOUCHED THE FEET OF HER DEAD HUSBAND...


...AND PICKED UP THE SWORD LYING BESIDE HIM.

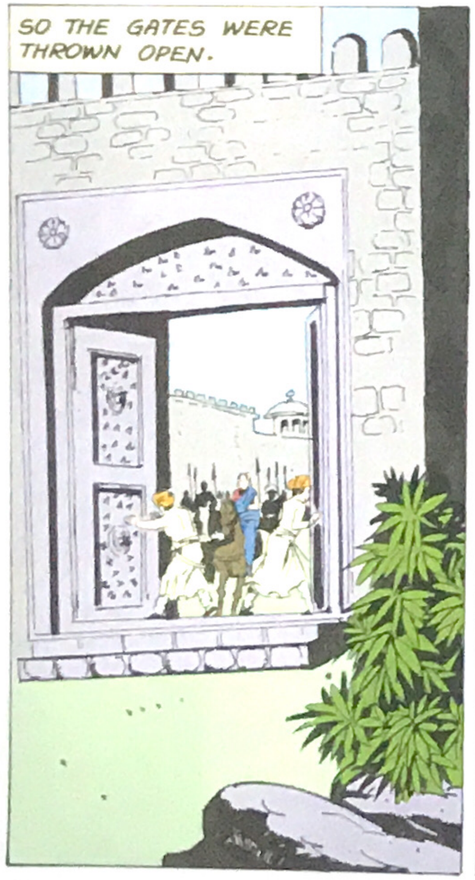
WE WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT.


THE FOLLOWING DAY —
RANI SAHEBA, THE FIRE HAS DESTROYED ALL THE FOOD GRAINS.

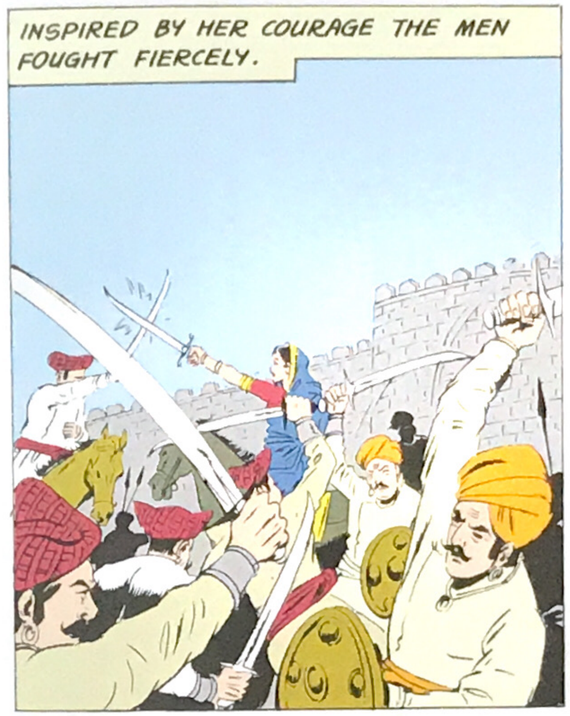

AND NO SUPPLIES CAN REACH US UNTIL THE SIEGE IS WITHDRAWN.

DADAJI WILL NOT WITHDRAW THE SIEGE.
WHAT SHALL WE DO THEN, RANI SAHEBA?

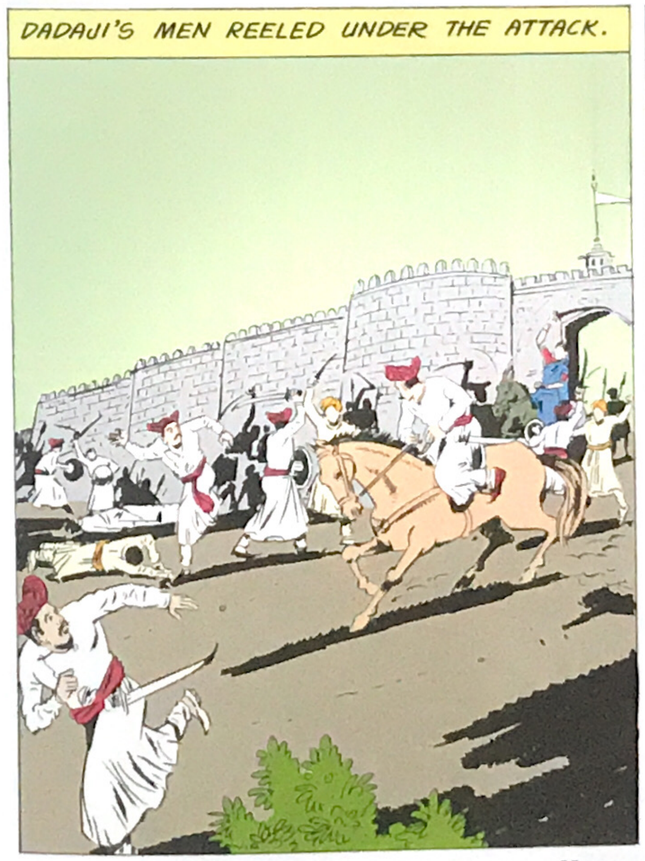
WE'LL BREAK THE SIEGE.

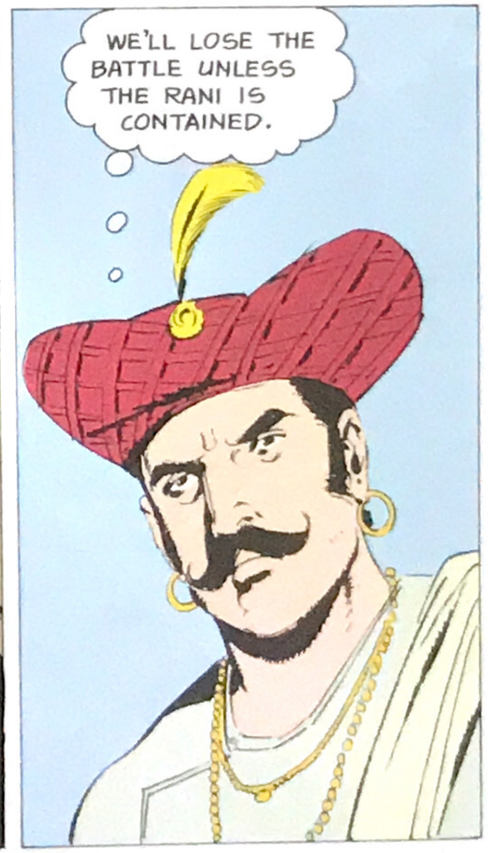

SO THE GATES WERE THROWN OPEN.

THE RANI RODE OUT.
ATTACK!


INSPIRED BY HER COURAGE THE MEN FOUGHT FIERCELY.

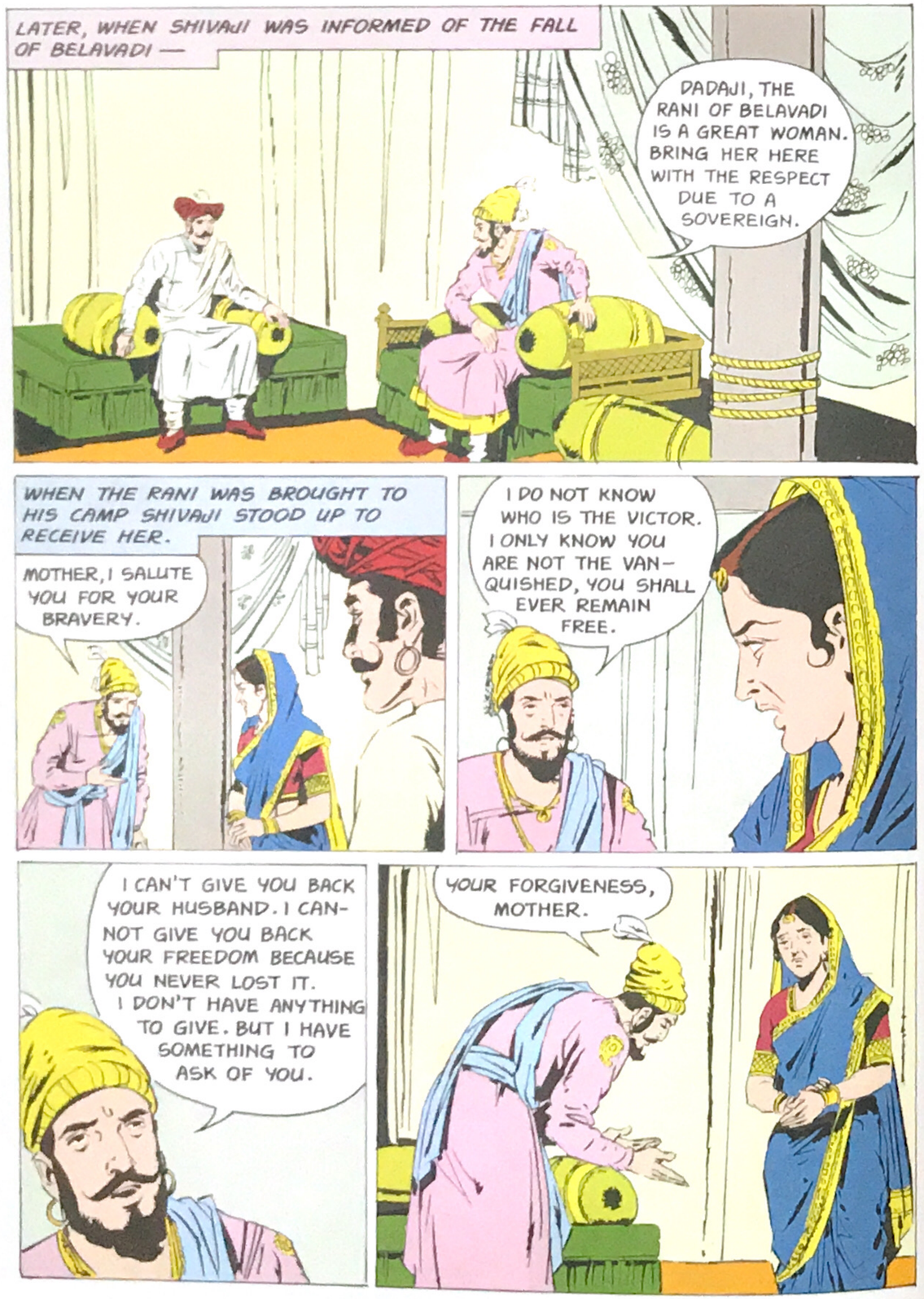
THE RANI MOVED WITH LIGHTNING SPEED.


DADAJI'S MEN REELED UNDER THE ATTACK.


WE'LL LOSE THE BATTLE UNLESS THE RANI IS CONTAINED.

SURROUND THE RANI! DISARM HER!
AS THE MEN CLOSED IN ON HER, THE RANI FOUGHT EVEN MORE VIGOROUSLY.
GET HER HORSE!
THE LEGS OF THE RANI'S HORSE WERE HACKED OFF.
BUT THE RANI WAS QUICK.

SHE JUMPED OFF THE HORSE AND...
...CONTINUED THE FIGHT.
BUT SHE WAS STRUCK FROM BEHIND...
...AND HER SWORD FLEW OFF.
SHE STOOD DISARMED. NO ONE MOVED TOWARDS HER. ALL STOOD STILL.
THEN THE RANI SPOKE.
I ACCEPT DEFEAT. PLEASE ENSURE THAT MY PEOPLE COME TO NO HARM.
THEY WILL BE SAFE, RANI SAHEBA.


LATER, WHEN SHIVAJI WAS INFORMED OF THE FALL OF BELAVADI —
DADAJI, THE RANI OF BELAVADI IS A GREAT WOMAN. BRING HER HERE WITH THE RESPECT DUE TO A SOVEREIGN.
WHEN THE RANI WAS BROUGHT TO HIS CAMP SHIVAJI STOOD UP TO RECEIVE HER.
MOTHER, I SALUTE YOU FOR YOUR BRAVERY.
I DO NOT KNOW WHO IS THE VICTOR. I ONLY KNOW YOU ARE NOT THE VANQUISHED, YOU SHALL EVER REMAIN FREE.
I CAN'T GIVE YOU BACK YOUR HUSBAND. I CANNOT GIVE YOU BACK YOUR FREEDOM BECAUSE YOU NEVER LOST IT. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO GIVE. BUT I HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK OF YOU.
YOUR FORGIVENESS, MOTHER.

I ENTERED YOUR CAMP FILLED WITH HATRED — HATRED FOR HIM WHOM I HAD ONCE ADMIRED.
BUT YOUR WORDS HAVE DISPELLED MY HATRED. I NO LONGER FEEL BITTER.
BLESS ME, MOTHER. I NEED YOUR BLESSINGS.
I WISH YOU WELL, MAHARAJ. MAY GOD BE WITH YOU!

THE GIFT
SHIVAJI HELD A SPECIAL DURBAR TO MARK THE CONQUEST OF KALYAN.
ONE BY ONE THE SPOILS OF THE CAMPAIGN WERE PRESENTED TO HIM.
ABAJI MAHADEV, THE COMMANDER-IN-CHARGE OF THE KALYAN CAMP HAD A UNIQUE GIFT TO OFFER.
MAHARAJ! I HAVE A VERY SPECIAL GIFT FOR YOU!
THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF MULLA AHMED, AN OFFICIAL OF KALYAN WHO RAN AWAY WHEN WE TOOK THE FORT.

ISN'T SHE BEAUTIFUL? WOULDN'T YOU LOVE TO OWN HER?
SHIVAJI STOOD UP...
...WALKED UP TO THE GIRL...
...AND PLACED HIS HAND ON HER HEAD.
YES. I'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU...
...AS MY SISTER!
MAHARAJ!

* MOTHER

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